A

SCENE OF CORRUPTION Discover'd:

WITH

Some Particulars of a Melancholy Place

IN A

LETTER

To the Right Honourable

PHILIP Lord HARDWICK,

Lord High Chancellor of *Great Britain.*

By a GENTLEMAN in Distress.

Experientia docet.

LONDON:

Printed in *Union-Street, Westminster-*

N. B. *What is sent to J. Leake, at the Printing Offes Will be apply'd to the Benefit of the Author.*

BRITISH MUSEUM
15 62
MAY

My Lord,

BEING convinc'd your Lordships inclinations are to Justice; I thought proper to represent the State of the unfortunate-part of Mankind, and to shew the Pains they have taken for redress, not doubting your Lordships Assistance at so Seasonable a Juncture, in the behalf of the many Thousands that are Oppress'ed, within the Prisons of this Kingdom. At the same time I humbly presume to Congratulate your Lordship upon your Lordships meritorious promotion and to observe that since my Manuscript to your Lordship, I have made the two following Remarks, practiz'd in the Court your Lordship lately was Chief of (viz.) Suffering Declarations to be Lodged against Prisoners for Debt, for any Summ without the Plantiff being obliged to Swear to the same. And also Charging Prisonors in Execution without giving them notice thereof. The former was practiced in the Court of Common Pleas about three Years past, not now, the latter the Prisoners are brought into Court to receive. Therefore in a Station to take the Benefit of any Act of Clemency, the Legislature shall Judge them worthy of. I must beg l ave to note to your Lordship that there is a Law in force that Deems those Idle Persons as Vagrants, that give themselves up to that shameful Practice of Begging, and that how Cruel it is another should subsist to oblige them to take up that Scandalous imployment, and to

give

give up that decorum *which is neceſſary to keep up a decency: which Cuſtom proves a* Nurcery *and very Corruptive, not only to the Priſoners themſelves but to their Families: highly neceſſary to be be taken into Conſideration, as well as that formerly very bad Practice of holding Perſons to Bail, without the Creditors ſwearing to their debts; and that it is humbly apprehended the following Charities were given to prevent thoſe Evil Cuſtoms, in ſuch Perſons who are by their unforeſeen misfortunes render'd uſeleſs. There being many in this Priſon that have fallen a Sacrifice to their Creditors, above ſeven Years. I do aſſure your Lordſhip I would be no Idle Spectator of Miſery, had I a Purſe agreeable to my Spirit and Experience, are in Voluntary Actions to meet with a ſeverer puniſhment then Voluntary ones. Pardon this in him who is with the Author.*

Common ſide of Kings Bench Priſon March, 1736-7.

Your Lordſhips unfortunate but moſt Obedient and moſt Dutiful humble Servant,

PHILANDER,

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 62 MAY

To the Kings moſt Excellent Majeſty,

The Addreſs and humble Petition of the Priſoner for Debt, in your Majeſties Priſon of Kings Bench wh. of numbers are large.

Moſt humbly ſheweth,

THAT we tho' the moſt unhappy of all you Maieſties Subiects, yet with Hearts full of Joy humbly congratulate your Maieſties ſafe arrival int theſe your Dominions beſeeching the almighty b whom kings reign-long to preſerve your Royal Perſo in proſperity to rule over us, together with your Roy al Conſort our gracious Queen *Caroline*, and that thi bleſſing may be extended to future Ages. We hop there never will want one of your Royal Family t ſucceed your Sacred Maieſty to the Throne, adorn' wi

with all thoſe Heavenly and Princely Graces that gives
o much Luſtre to your Majeſtys Reign.

We your Majeſtys poor diſtreſſed Subiects and Pe-
itioners, although by our misfortunes baniſh'd as to
his World, and in a manner buried in oblivion, yet
umbly preſume to throw our ſelves at your Majeſtys
eet, and crave leave to lay before your Majeſty our
reſent ſufferings which at preſent render us uncapable
f being ſervicable either to your Majeſty or our
Country.

The Act for the Releif of Debtors with reſpect to
heir Impriſonment which is renewed by Parliament
ntill the year 40 Extends to releive the meaner ſort
tho' not more indigent than your Majeſtys humble
Petitioners,) and as are not ſo unhappy as to be in-
ebted to any one Perſon or Perſons the Summ of
ool. theſe are diſcharg'd on their Surrendering their
ll to their Creditors, or are allowed 2 s. 4 d. by them
Weekly for their Subſiſtance.

But thoſe of a Superior andmore Liberal Fortune
Education and Credit, who have either ventur'd their
ortunes for the ſervice of the Publick, or by endea-
ouring to improve the ſame, have met with many
nforeſeen-misfortunes, theſe unhappy Perſons when
hrown into a Priſon, are entirely by the late Act un-
rovided for; and there forced to lay in *Dark Dun-
eons* without Beds and other Neceſſarys, and for their
aily Sub ſiſtance obliged to beg, and from a notion
he generality of your Majeſtys good Subjects have
ad of thelate Act, many of our Charities that were
ormerly given are loſt ; ſo that your Majeſtys poor
iſtreſſed Petitioners

BRITISH MUSEUM 62 MAY

Petitioners in the Extremity of Want have ſcarce any thing to Subſiſt on: For which reaſon their Healths are deſtroy'd, many of your *Majeſtys* Loyal *Subjects* daily Periſh: Their Families impoverſh'd, and there by the Rates greatly increaſed in their ſeveral Pariſhes, a greivance we humbly preſume, not ſo much as heard of in other Countries much leſs practiſed, for there the *Mericleſs Creditor* is by their Laws oblig'd ro ſupport the unhappy Debtor, during his miſerable confinement.

That in the Reign of our moſt gracious queen *Elizabeth* of bleſſed memory a Tax was laid on every County for the Relief of your *Majeſtys* Petitioners, which ſtill continues, but your *Majeſtys* Petitioners by ſome Arts or Means are deprived of the ſame, and receive little or no benefit, thereby, (ſo that in the Extream of Winter your *Majeſtys* Petitioners have not 2 d. per Day to ſupport) together with other conſiderable Gifts, your poor Petitioners are deprived of.

Your *Majeſtys* Petitioners with all humble Submiſſion apprehend that this Ill, as well as hard Cuſtom and Uſage from a Creditor to a Debtor, was firſt introduced into this Nation by ſome great Enemy to it, as if he reſolv'd to *Starve* one part of the *Subjects* in a helpleſs Priſon, and to ſcare and terrifie the other from its Native Country, by both which your *Majeſty* is deprived of ſo many uſeful *Subjects*, and the Publick from the Benefit that might accrue, by ſeting ſo many *Objects* of compaſſion at Liberty, from the miſerable loathſome

loathſome, unhappy Confinement they are now languiſhing in, which Fellons and Criminals are at a certain Period of time, and therefore unleſs ſome redreſs be offorded your Majeſts poor Petitioners, is their Caſe more happy then unfortunate Debtors.

Therefore moſt gracious and dread Sovereign your moſt loyal Subjects and poor Petitioners humbly implore the almighty to touch your Sacrd Heart, with a ſcence of our preſent misfortunes, and troubles, Craving your Majeſtys pious recommendation on our behalf. To Parliament for ſome Relief, that your poor diſtreſſed Petitioners on their ſurrendring their all to their Creditor or Creditors, may be either releaſed from their preſent miſerable and deplorable confinemeut, or be allowed by them ſome proper Subſiſtance.

And your Majeſtys poor Petionors as in duty bound ſhall ever pray, &c.

The following Petition preſented to the Lord *high* Chancellor *craving his* Lordſhips *recommendation to Parliament March the* 1736

The

To the Honourable the Knights Citizens and Burgesses in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of John Langdon *and* John Chester, *Assistants, charg'd in Execution above the Sum of one Hundred Pounds, Prisoners for Debt in his Majesty's Prison of* Kings Bench *in the behalf of themselves and others,*

Humbly Sheweth,

THAT whereas this Prison is a receptacle for the unfortunate part of Mankind from all parts of this Kingdom, Petitioners humbly apprehend where any oppression shall appear that they Labour under have a Right to applye to this Hon. House for redress wherein every member hath a desire to releive and redress their Country-men.

That your Petitioners are not only labouring under the opression of Confinement by reason of their *inability*, but also confin'd in a Prison, that is in a most ruinated Condition both in itself and its Goverment To Wit the Prison on the Master-side is in a manner ready to fall, the Rooms therein exposed to the Weather by decay of the Walls, the Windows unglazed, the Furniture of the Rooms destroy'd and the Prisoners obliged to pay for what they do not enjoy.

The Sick unprovided for, and the Prison Crowded

 with

with a Number of Objects.

The Debtors charged in Execution above the Sum of 100*l.*

Thoſe under Contempt of Court that lay for trifling Coſts, and thoſe that lay confin'd for want of proceedings, being wholly unprovided with any Weekly Allowance from their Creditors by any Law in force.

And if after ſtruggling with Want on the Maſter's Side they are forced to ſeek Relief, ſubmit and go on the Common-Side, by preferring a ſhort Death, muſt, before Admiſſion, ſwear they have not, nor can command 5*l.* in the World to intitle them to the Charities of the ſaid Priſon, and oblig'd in a publick Manner to beg at the Grate aforeſaid for a Support, and after the Fatiagues of the Day to lay down in dark damp Dungeons, unprovided with Beds, &c. where little or no Reſt can be expected.

And locked up even from the Benefit of the Air the Priſon affords; but if taken ſick many muſt periſh, were it not for the Aſſiſtance of their Neighbours, altho' there is a kind Proviſion made for them by the Counties (the which hath run in Arrears to Petitioners near 300*l.*) and by Means of other Legacies, the former they receive little or no Benefit from, and the latter moſtly ſunk, to the Sum of near 200 *l. per Ann.* ſo that the Arrears are very conſiderable; whereby it often happens in the Extream of Winter, they have not a Penny a Day, one Day with another, to ſupport themſelves.

The Paupers detain'd for Fees, and fees extorted from

from Priſoners that Neceſſity obliges to go on the Common ſide *&c.*

Dvine Service for Months together performed bnt once a Week. And if any of your Petitioners preſume to complain, however ſo juſtly, a puniſhment is contriv'd, as hath been (and at preſent is) by the Keepers, their Creatures, or Agents for ſuch complaints, and certain Books and Papers belonging to the ſaid Priſon, relating to the Rules and Cuſtoms, have been convey'd away, by means whereof the Priſoners when thus oppreſſed cannot have proper redreſs.

The *Priſoners* who have had Money to purchaſe the Rules are frequently called in, for no *Juſt Occaſion*, and locked up in theſe *diſmal Cells*, in Order to ſink their *Purchaſe*-money, or extort greater Sums according to their fancied abilities.

No Liſt of Charities belonging to the ſaid Priſon, hung up in any publick Room or place, as is directed by this Honourable Houſe.

The Priſon being Farm'd, makes it a place of Corruption.

That Petitioners having repreſented theſe complaints *&c.* to the Judges of the Court of Kings Bench, laſt *Michaelmaſs* Term, by Mr. *William Dare*, who hath relieved their Wants in a great meaſure, for a Time, and in Compaſſion to their Sufferings, offer'd to advance Forty pounds upon the Arrears of the County,

or

or Exhibition-Money, or to procure an Order for the ſame, upon the preſent Receivers applying to the Lord Chief Juſtice, but they could have no redreſs, Obliges your diſtreſs'd Petitioners to lay their Greivances before this Honourable Houſe.

Therefore your Petitioners humbly appeal to this Honourable Houſe, and moſt ſubmiſſively intreat, that the Committee appointed by this Honourable Houſe, to inſpect into the State of the Goals, may be revived, in order to enquire into the *Sufferings* and *Miseries* of your Petitioners, which are almoſt inexpreſſable; ſomtimes being puniſh'd with the want of the Neceſſaries of Life, and like to become a *Sacrifice* for theſe their *Juſt Complaints*: Or to afford ſuch other releif for the better preſervation of his *Majeſtys* Subjects, as this Honourable Houſe ſhall ſeem meet.

And your petitioners as in duty bound ſhall ever pray.

Officers appointed by the Rules of the Kings Bench, to Act in the priſon in deviding the Charities &c.

For the *knights Citizens* and *Burgeſſes* in *Parliament* Aſſembled.

The humble Petition of *Wm. Dare*, *Richard Stevans*

Stevens, *Richard Harling*, *John Berry* &c. Creditors to the Common ſide of the kings Bench priſon, in behalf of themſelves and others,

Sheweth,

THAT, in or about the 43. or 44. of the Reign of queen *Elizabeth* of glorious memory a Tax was laid on the Counties &c. for the ſupport and Maintainance of the poor Priſoners in the kings bench and Marſhelſea Priſons. That purſuant to Rule the 21ſt. of the Honourable Court of kings bench, relating to the ſaid Priſon, (viz.) That particular Care be taken of all Priſoners, of the Common ſide, who ſhall at any time happen to be Sick, and that all proper Neceſſaries ſhall be provided for them, by the Steward and Aſſiſtants, and that they be reimburſt out of the firſt County Money.

That Petitioners upon ſuch Proviſion have ſeverally given Credit to the ſaid Priſon to the Amount of above one hundred pounds, and ſome of them for ſeveral Years have been kept out of their ſeveral Bills; and that upon application to the Lord Chief *Juſtice Hardwick* of ſuch their hardſhips, his *Lordſhip* about *Midſummer* laſt, granted his Order for *Henry Maſterman*, Eſq; receiver of the ſaid County *Money*, to render an Account to the Priſoners, which account is hereunto annex'd: And thereby it appears the ſaid Counties &c. were in Arrears to *Midſummer* 1736, 237 l. And that for 3 Years paſt, out of 68 l. per *Annum* he had received but 81 l. and at the ſame time brought the Priſoners in Debt 51 l. 8 s. 5 d. Whereby Petitioners

are

re kept out of their Money, and the Priſoners from he ſupply the Legiſlature intended them. The Priſon they are in being a Cloſe confin'd Place, miſer- ble and damp, and muſt of Courſe *Irrepair* their *Healths*, ſome of them having been confin'd above Seven Years, and it is much to be fear'd ſeveral of heir Liberties retarded by ſuch Negelcts, many of the Priſoners being charged in Execution above the Sum of One Thouſand Pounds.

Therefore your Petitioners intreat the aſſiſtance of this Honourable Houſe for an amendment in the ſaid Act, and for the ſpeedy payment of their ſeveral *Credits*, they have given the ſaid *Priſon*: Of which they are ready to give their reſpective Oaths, being ſtill kept out of the ſaid Money due to them with great Submiſſion hope the Matters herein complain'd of, may be referr'd to a Committee of this Honourourable Houſe.

And your *Petitioners*, as in duty bound, ſhall ever pray.

RECEIVED by *Henry Maſterman*, *Eſq*; for the poor Priſoners of the *Kings Bench* from *Mid-ſummer* 1735, to *Midſummer* 1736.

Counties in Arrears.	
Berks, Years	3
Bucks	3
Bedford	4
Cumberland	3
Cornwall	4
Cambridge	1
Cheshire	8
Derby	3
Devonshire	3
Dorsetshire	2
Durham	5
Essex	4
Glouceſter	1
Hereford	4
Hertford	4
Huntington	1
Kent	0
Leiceſter	4
Lincoln	2
Lancashire	5
Middleſex	1
Monmouth	4
Norfolk	2
	71
Northampton	1
Northumberland	4
Notingham	2
Oxford	2
Rutland	3
Salop	4
Southampton	3
Stafford	4
Suffolk	3
Somerſet	1
Surry	2
Suſſex	1
Warwick	3
Weſtmoreland	4
Wilts	0
Worceſter	4
Yorkshire	2
	40 43
	71
	114

Counties, Cities in Arrears	
York	3
Briſtol	3
Canterbury	1
Cheſter	2
Coventry	4
Exon	2
Litchfield	5
London	4
Lincoln	0
Norwich	2
	10 26

Towns.	
Hull	
Northampton	
New Caſtle	
Poole	
Southampton	
Welch Counties in Arrears	
Merioneth	
Angleſea	
Carnarvon	
Carmarthan	
Pembrooke	
Cardigan	
Denbigh	
Flint	
Montgomery	
Radnor	
Brecon	
Glamorgan	
	12

Total of Arrears, to King's Bench to Mid. 17

Acco

Account current by the Receiver of the County Money *to* Midſummer, 1736.

REceived from *midſummer* 1733 to *midſummer* 1736 out of the County, or Exhibition Money due to poor *Priſoners* in the *King's-Bench Priſon*, being three Years Payment out of 68 *l. per Ann.* 18 *l.*

Ballance due to the Receiver 5 *l.* 8 *s.* 5 *d.*

Total, 86 *l.* 8 *s.* 5 *d.*

Diſburſed by the Receiver, and paid to Stewards, Apothecary's Bills, &c. 73 *l.* 4 *s.* 5 *d.*

Poundage upon 81 *l.* for the Receipt of the Money and keeping the Account, at the Rate of 2 *s.* 8 *l.* 2 *s*

To Trouble and Expences in ſerving Notices to the Sheriffs, 4 *l.* 4 *s.*

To make up the *Accounts*, 18 *s.*

Total, 86 *l.* 8 *s.* 5 *d.*

An Account of Money *formerly ſaid to be paid, and Legacies left for the Uſe aforeſaid, that are either loſt or ſunk, as appears by their* Memorandums.

THE High-Bar Money put into the Poor's Box, upon Motions in the Court of *King's-Bench*, 12 *d.* at leaſt, which uſually came to about 15 *l.* every Term, and was conſtantly paid, 'till of late, 60 *l.*

By the laſt Will and Teſtament of *James Dodd*, a Farmer at *Hartly-Row* near *Hertford-bridge*, in the County of *Southampton*, is oblig'd to pay 30 *l. per Ann.* without Fee or Reward, 30 *l.*

By

By *Arthur Child*, of the County of *Hartford* Esq; 24 *l per Ann.* for ever; which said Legacy was paid by Mr. *John Nosh* of *Stephenage*, in the said County, out of a Farm of 120 *l per Ann.* laying in the said Parish as may appear by the Donors will in *Doctor's Commons*, in 1669, 24 *l*

By *Sam. West* Cittzen of *London*, 16 *l per Ann.* to be paid out of Ground-Rents arising from several Houses standing and being in *Coleman-Street*, *London*; this Legacy hath been usually paid by Mr. *Grant*, 16 0 0

By Mr. *John Nill*, of *Charlton* in the County of *Kent*, 12 *l per Ann.* for ever, to be paid out of an Estate in *Charlton*, now or late in the Possession of Sir *Wm. Langhorn*, this Legacy was given in 1654. 12 0 0

By the Family of the *Lushington's* payable out of an Estate in Kings-Down, in *Kent*, for ever, formerly paid by Mr. *Hill*. 11 13 4

By the last Will and Testament of *Robert Henley* Esq; 10 *l per Ann.* for ever, payable by the Possessers of an Estate laying near the Church of *Harrow* on the Hill, in the County of *Hartford* which Estate is now of late in the Possession of the Family of the *Waldows* 10 0 0

By the Master of the Roles who usually paid 40 *s per Ann.* 0 19 0

By the Lady Osborn, 2 5 0
The Silver Box at Christmas, &c. sunk upon them The Basket Men, &c.
5 Dozen of Bread lost by the Mercers Company.

An Account of those Legacies and Gifts as appears by their Members to be annuallyand Quarterly.

By Sir *Thomas Gresham*, 10 *l.* per Aunum, per Quarterly. 10 0 0
By the Lady *Osborn*, by the Register of her Will, 4 *l.* 5 *s.* is given, and only 40 *s.* is Paid, *viz.* 10 *s.* per Quarter. 2 0 0
By the Lady *Bertie* Yearly 2 0 0
By the Master of the Rolls. 1 3 0
By Mr. Rampron call'd Brass Money 18 0
By the several Companies in *London*
Fishmongers. 0 13 4
Mrs. *Mews* once in 3 Years 13 *s.* and 4 *d.* 0 13 4
Mr. *Smith.* 0 3 4
Mercers Company 1 0 0
Leather-Sellers Company, 10 Dozen, Quarterly Value. 1 8 0
Cutlers Company. 0 15 0
Salters Company. 0 5 0
Grocers Company. 0 5 0
Ironmongers Company for Beef, 15 Stone weight,

weight, and 5 Dozen of Bread, Value 1 0 0

Drapers Company, 5 Dozen of Bread on Chriſtmas Eve, Value 0 4 0

St. *Andrew*'s Underſhaft. 0 17 1

St. *Sepulchers.* 0 10 0

St. *Ethelbourgh.* 0 9 0

St. *Dunſtan*'s in the Eea, for Beef, 20 Stone and 1 Peck.

Of Oatmeal, Value 1 2 0

Allhollows Lumbard-ſtreet, at Chriſtmas, 8 Stone of Beef, Value 0 9 0

Five Dozen of Bread every eight Weeks, the Gift of Mrs. *Margaret Sincott*, Value 2 12 0

My Lord Chief Juſtice of the *Kings Bench*, generally gives Yearly 10 10 0

N. B. *To collect theſe Gifts and Charities, and to ſeek after the County Money, they are obliged to elect a Steward, who charges* 16 d. *per Week Salary Poundage*, &c. *and whoſe incum ſeldom comes to leſs than* 20 l. *per Ann.*

A Copy

A Copy of an Affidavit.

S. W. a Priſoner on the Common Side of *Kings Bench* Priſon, maketh Oath, and ſaith, that the Charities of this Priſon yield but three Farthings, a Penny, and a Penny half Penny; and ſeldom exceeds two-pence a Day for each of their Shares, for this Deponent and *J. W.* and *G. G.* (who are in a little Room in the ſaid Priſon appointed for the Sick) to live upon, and that there is neither Fire or Candle allowed to this Deponent or them, and that this Deponent and them are in a ſtarving Condition; neither can this Deponent or them procure any ſupport from the County, Money allowed by an Act of Parliament to Support in this the Deponent and their Extremity,

S. W.

Sworn in the *Kings Bench* Priſon this 20th Day of *November*, 1735. before me *James Johnſon*, by Commiſſion.

When unhappy Men are oppreſt,
To deceive them, bad at the beſt:
To aſperſe them more than Juſt,
And, may be deemed, Vile at beſt.

The

The Case of A. B. *a Prisoner in the Common Side of* Kings Bench *Prison upon the following Account.*

A. B. was imployed by *C. D. &c.* to act as an Agent from them, in vending and disposing of certain Glass Wares, and was to be allowed by them 10 *l.* per Cent. Common, bearing Expences with Customers. For Performance of which *A. B.* stood engaged himself, in a Bond of 500 *l.* Penalty 1000 *l.* under certain Articles, therein contained, to the said *C. D.* &c. and after that *A. B.* engaged himself in another Bond of the like Penalty with Security, and with intent to Cancel the former Bond, which said Bond was to be void upon the Joint and Latter Bond. The said *C. D. &c.* in or about 1729, after possessing themselves of all, *A. B.* Books Vouchers, and Accounts, puts the said former Bond in Suit against *A. B.* for not accounting,) which said Bond was void by the Colatteral one) and by Reason of *A. B*'s. Poverty proceeded to Execution, and afterwards proved the said Judgment so obtained under a Commission of Bankruptcy, to prevent *A. B.* of Number and Value, notwithstanding the said *C. D. &c.* had made their Election before, by charging *A. B.* in Execution, the which hath reduced *A. B.* and his Family, that he

he is obliged to Beg at the Publick Grate of the ſaid Priſon, for a Support and his Family, to become Miſerable, to the Damage of *A. B.* in ſeveral Thouſands of Pounds.

N. B. *A. B.* in the Collateral Bond, engaged one *R. C.* to be his Security to *C. D. &c.* which Security hath made Satisfaction for the ſaid Bond, to the ſaid *C. D. &c.* refuſing any Account to *A. B.* and have held *A. B.* in confinement above ſix Years upon the ſaid former Bond, neither is *A. B.* indebted to the ſaid *C. D.* in Value one Doit, or are the ſaid *C. D. &c.* in any Ways demnified by *A. B.*

F I N I S.